



A Closer Look

By Ernest Kreiling

HOLLYWOOD — "Some degree of ability, willingness to work, and a very earnest desire to be of service."

These splendid qualifications combined with an admitted lack of experience in communications formed E. William Henry's self-appraisal of his qualifications to become a member of the Federal Communications Commission when he testified before a Senate Committee last October.

Eight months later this 34-year-old Memphis attorney and friend of Bobby Kennedy is now qualified to serve as that commission's chairman, a powerful and strategic position in the regulation and harassment of broadcasting.

Mr. Henry's appointment, of course, was made possible by the fact that in two years in office Newton Minow had conveniently achieved sufficient public fame to find private fortune — a reported \$100,000 a year job outside of government.

FEW CAN question that Mr. Henry's cultural background eminently qualifies him to lead us in shaping America's popular arts and in molding radio and television's service to the public. But wasn't it a felicitous set of circumstances that joined his unassailable artistic and communications ability with his noteworthy political skill for the Kennedy cause in Tennessee?

Insight into Mr. Henry's attitudes toward radio and television became possible last winter, after two months experience as a Commissioner when he led a governmental investigation into the programming of the television stations in Omaha, Nebraska. No one in Omaha had complained, you understand, but a solicitous FCC was concerned lest the citizens of Omaha might not know what to like. The result of the investigation was overwhelming public approval of the job the local stations were doing, a fact that would please a truly benevolent bureaucrat.

BUT WHEN asked if the Omaha stations measured up to the FCC standards, Mr. Henry, in the course of his reply, said, "I don't think necessarily that the standard the community might have is necessarily the one we would have."

This is apparently New Frontier-ese for, "The people don't really know what's good for them or what they should like. WE do, of course," the WE being an omniscient governmental commission now headed by a 34-year-old Tennessee attorney whose principal qualification is a glowing record of good political works in his home state.

After promoting Mr. Henry to chairman, President Kennedy then filled the existing vacancy by appointing to the commission a Mr. Lee Loewinger, an Assistant Attorney General. His transfer to the FCC was prompted, according to the New York Times, because, "It has become evident for some time that Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy was not happy with Mr. Loewinger."

BROADCASTERS are charged under the law with serving in the public's interest, convenience and necessity. Presidential appointments are apparently immune from such principles, especially if they conflict with brother Bobby's interest and convenience. Here his good friend Mr. Henry was promoted to a position in public view and an underling who had become persona non grata had been conveniently removed from Bobby's view.



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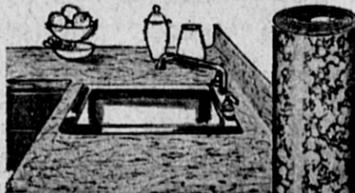
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- 30"x54" ... 2.34
- 36"x24" ... 1.86
- 36"x30" ... 2.04
- 36"x36" ... 2.21
- 36"x42" ... 2.39
- 36"x48" ... 2.57
- 36"x54" ... 3.09
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